

INTERVIEW

At the Sources of the Phenomenology of Life* **An Interview with Ana-Teresa Tymieniecka (Hanover, NH)** **by Yvanka B. Raynova (Sofia/Vienna)**

Raynova: *Professor Tymieniecka, you had an impressive formation, having such eminent teachers as Roman Ingarden and Józef Bocheński. How much of that formation influenced your own philosophy, or how much do you owe to your masters?*

Tymieniecka: This is a terribly complex question. My interest in philosophy was awakened when I was very young, before even knew the meaning of the word "philosophy." It came out in high school during the class in Latin literature, when our teacher asked for a volunteer to prepare a paper on Horace, more specifically on his "philosophy." I was about fourteen then and did not know the meaning of the word, but fascinated, I volunteered. And as I pondered the verses of Horace and wondered what philosophy might be in them, I sought the help of a remarkable man there in our small town in Poland. This older gentleman walked about dressed in the same clothing summer and winter, never changing its thickness in the cold. He had a long beard and enormous blue eyes. And he walked in a meditative way. He was a private tutor and was considered a "philosopher." Perhaps that was, because of his look. He was for many like Socrates himself. And so I asked a classmate, who took tutoring in German from him, whether he would consent to talk with me so that I could learn from him whether what I thought to be philosophy was philosophy or not. She asked him and he consented. I went to him half trembling. After a good session, he said to me: "Well, that is it exactly; you have already in mind the propaedeutics of philosophy." He then invited me to chat about philosophy. On my next visit he gave me Twardowski's book *Der Gegenstand der Vorstellung*. I found it very difficult to understand. First of all my German was not yet good enough, and then it was a very technical work. But I did not give up, and he gave me other works. He gave me *The Republic* of Plato and portions of the Dialogues. If I expand on this, it

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is for two reasons. Twenty-five years later, when I was studying in Switzerland, I discovered that my tutor had been a fellow student of Ingarden in Lvov under Kazimierz Twardowski. Now, Twardowski himself was a student of Brentano. So when after the war I passed the university entrance examinations and went to study in Kraków and landed in Roman Ingarden's class, there was nothing astonishing in the philosophy he imparted; I was familiar to all. I came to Ingarden and said that all this makes me tremble with excitement, because I had already read and thought about it. But I asked him why he did not speak anymore about ontology. He replied that if he were to talk more about the modes of being, as I wished, the class would be empty. There were 300 in it otherwise! And so, you see, my biding interest from childhood for philosophy, without my knowing exactly what it was, led me to Ingarden and then straight to phenomenology.

Through Twardowski I got from Brentano the basic notions underlying phenomenology. That was the very beginning. I studied under Ingarden for two years, during which I completed the four year philosophy program, something that was made possible immediately in the postwar years. This was done to compensate for the time in which the Germans had closed the universities. From Kraków I went to Switzerland. My father had died when I was nine, and my brother being twenty years older than me was like a father to me. My brother was a hero of the battle for Monte Cassino (the tank unit he led opened the way to Piedimonte). As with the rest of General Anders' army, he could not return to Communist Poland. So he settled in England. He wanted absolutely that I come there. Since our family had established ties in Switzerland, the University of Fribourg being our chosen seat of studies, I landed there. An uncle had been professor and dean there. He had just died, leaving a small inheritance. I went to collect the inheritance, and my brother joined me there. He introduced me to Father Bocheński, who had been his army chaplain. And so it transpired that I remained at Fribourg to study. Thus, a coincidence played a strong role in my career.

Now, I spontaneously gave myself the mission of spreading in the West the knowledge of the work of Ingarden, who was completely unknown abroad. A few scholars such as Jean Wahl did remember meeting him, but they really did not know much about him. Landgrebe and Spiegelberg remembered *Das literarische Kunstwerk*, but that was it. Since I had developed a great affection for my master, I spent ten years making him known. But by the end of that effort I was no longer an Ingardenian. At the beginning, I swore by him, and whenever I befriended a philosopher, I would give him a full-fledged lecture on what Ingarden proposed, on what problems he resolved. I recall particularly such a session with Jean Wahl at a cafe in Paris. But I did not believe anymore in his philosophy. I still thought that he should be better known, but I developed some doubts. Those began actually when I was still in Kraków. I also undertook studies at the Academy of Fine Arts there. I was painting in the morning and going

to courses at the university in the afternoon. Ingarden's main course was in aesthetics, a course I took for those two years. His ontology of aesthetics was really the basis for a great deal of his philosophy. I was struck by the discrepancy between the way a philosopher considered a work of art as an observer and the way in which a painter sees it. There was such a radical discrepancy. I started to wonder about the role of creative experience in making a work of art, and so I began to study not only its ideal structure, but also the observer's recovery of that structure. Now, in Switzerland, I was obtaining a double degree in philosophy and French literature. As the subject for my dissertation in French literature I choose the debate on pure poetry between Bremond and Valéry. Now, pure poetry was exactly the gist of creative accomplishment. Thus, I was already undermining in my mind the rigid ontological structure of Ingarden's theory of aesthetics. Later, in Fribourg, I became very skeptical about another point of Ingardenian ontology, which I want to remind here, because that point was also a classic foundation of Husserl's thought in his Göttingen years. Ingarden was Husserl's student and a member of the Göttingen School of phenomenology. He took from Husserl the fundamental intuitions and the eidetic method. And, like some other members of the Göttingen School (such as Reinach, Conrad-Martius, Edith Stein, etc.), he broke with Husserl when the master's focus turned to transcendental consciousness. The rigid phenomenological methodology and the whole framework inherited from Husserl by Ingarden awakened in me serious doubts concerning existence. The Göttingen School suspended existence and also the question of whether an object exists. That was one of the first steps of the phenomenological *epoché*, which was then really taken seriously, the so-called phenomenological reduction. That was the instrument of philosophical work for phenomenology, of phenomenological description. Well, the suspension of existence put me in great doubt, and I wrote a small article, which is somewhat obscure for me now. It was titled "Twenty Real Dollars." This was my first American foray in print. It appeared in *The Monist*. There I voiced radically a call for the recovery of existence against this complete suspension. Now, to tell the truth, at that time this was unheard of in phenomenology. Phenomenology after the Second World War was completely dedicated to the thought of the period of Husserl's *Ideas I*. That was the main work discussed at this time, and then slowly others of Husserl's works, right through his posthumous works, began to be discussed. In *Ideas I* Husserl was still maintaining the strict eidetic suspension of existence. Now, these two points, the need to philosophically appreciate creative experience, on the one hand, and the need to revamp phenomenological formulations to vindicate real existence, on the other, underlay the greening of my own philosophical thought, even before the writing of my doctoral dissertation. It was about the foundations of phenomenology in Ingarden and Hartmann, and I published it as *Essence and Existence* with Aubier. This work already showed that I was directing my thought on essence, or the a priori ideal thing, else-

where, that I found that the eidetic approach does not suffice. I found that essences cannot be sclerosed, that they are not unchangeable things. From there on I was really going my own way, without knowing that fully yet. My first original published paper – I had previously had articles on Ingarden, on his metaphysics and ethics – was "Eidos, Idea, and Participation," which appeared in *Kantstudien*. When I wrote it I thought that I was exfoliating Ingarden's theory of essence, i.e. his ontology. It was a very tough paper. Ingarden, like Husserl, never spoke on *methexis*, i.e. on how these ideal essences participates in concrete things. This is the great Platonic issue, of course. They had separated real existence from essences, but they could not deny that reality exists. Reality was always there, and from it they were deriving essences. But they never treated the question of the relationship between real existence and essences. So I attacked this question, and I thought that I did so in an Ingardenian way. I then sent Ingarden the manuscript, as we were at that time in intense communication, intensive as much as the handling of the mail between the West and Communist Poland allowed. I received a letter back saying that the thought developed in this paper was my own theory, and that he had never thought in such a way. Well, that was a terrible shock for me –it meant that I was now on my own, by myself, alone. It is so terribly easy to follow in the footsteps of a master, to just exfoliate his thought. But it is totally different to have to think *ab initio*. So I found myself thrown into the air. It was a terrible existential experience. I had to take about thirty footnotes that referred to Ingarden's works out of the paper. I published it without them. From there on I was thinking on my own. The next paper which I published in *Kantstudien* continued this one on the constitutive a priori. Now, Ingarden promised that he would write an answer to the first paper. But he did not. Instead he wrote a special treatise on essences, one which I did not read very carefully, I must say. From there on I was moving towards the vindication of real existence, but vindicating it via the relationship between creativity and the whole creative context. My next publication went far beyond the limits of phenomenology. That was "Prolegomena to the Phenomenology of Cosmic Creation." This was a daring thing, because before, in phenomenology, only Max Scheler delved into cosmic issues, but not into cosmic creation. This piece was well received among experts. Ingarden himself said that it was a very mature work. But he was very angry! He wrote me a letter in which he said that he is annoyed, because I, his student, was now talking about real individuals in philosophy. How, he asked, could I as his student do that? I answered him that in my own thought I actually did not owe that much to his thought. I said that I owed much less him than he owed to Husserl. That exchange was of some importance. Ingarden had visited us before in California and I read then the manuscript of the third volume of his *Controversy over the Existence of the World*, a volume dealing with the principle of causality, "das Kausalproblem." Later, I heard to my amazement that he was rewriting it. When it appeared three or four years later, and I

looked at it, I found that the main focus of the book was the real individual! He introduced this as the heart of his theory, and even italicized the words "real individual" throughout for emphasis. I have never mentioned this – saying it here for the first time to you – but the coincidence can be checked. So, I was entirely on my own then, navigating in the sphere of creative experience. I published *Eros and Logos: Introduction to the creative experience*. There was an opening to cosmology, an opening to reality in the first place, because essences, as I presented them, were creative principles and not eternal and unchangeable models, somehow incarnated in things. Essences, as I saw them, are regulative principles and points of reference, they are not fixed, hardened realities. That was the development of my thinking. We can say that between my childhood and my mature work I went through three phases, at least.

Raynova: *I know that you spend also some years in Paris. What influences could be found in your philosophical work from the time of your studies in France?*

Tymieniecka: Well, first, there was the contrast with Fribourg. Fribourg was a university where a militantly rationalist approach was taken to philosophy. It was a pure Aristotelianism, very rigid, that was taught. But I had there a pied-à-terre in contemporary philosophy. Father Bocheński, a logician, was giving a fascinating series of courses on the history of contemporary philosophy, a particular passion of his. Being a very honest scholar he believed that a historian has to put aside his own thinking and enter into the mind of the philosopher he presents and make the best of it. So there I learned all about the Göttingen School, the Freiburg School, all about Husserl's development, about all sorts of things that I never heard from Ingarden, who presented only his own phenomenology. It was Bocheński, who taught me about the course of Husserl's thought and the thinking of his students, Scheler, etc. Bocheński was really a marvelous man for me, for he was taking me to philosophical meetings. As a driver, he appreciated very much having a map reader along. So he took me to the World Congress at Amsterdam, even I was only a student. There, he introduced me to Bertrand Russell and other prominent figures. He invited also philosophers like Gabriel Marcel to present lectures at Fribourg and then he introduced me to them. He always introduced me as a philosopher. And so at a young age I was already going to Paris two or three times a year to talk with Louis Lavelle and Jean Wahl. Consequently the radical rationalism of Fribourg was challenged by the intense existential thought prevailing in Paris. This contrast and challenge was very important for my development. I mentioned Lavelle. He was not an existentialist at all but a pure metaphysician, a spiritualist. And so I was pulled in various directions which made me more and more delineate and clarify my own thinking.

Raynova: *In sum, was it Ingarden's and Husserl's suspension of the problem of existence through the method of reduction that led you to the Phenomenology of Life?*

Tymieniecka: I mentioned my orientation toward creativity, the expansion of phenomenology to reality and to the cosmos. These were my points of reference. These were the points from which my framework was elaborated. You are asking me about Husserl and Ingarden, but it was not simply these authors that I read. I was reading practically all of the phenomenologists of the Göttingen School. And then, when Heidegger's works began to be more disputed after the war, I read all his works, everything that he published. And, as I said, I was involved in discussions with existential thinkers. Of course, I read also everything of Sartre, and of Merleau-Ponty. So I was developing philosophically in a rather large orbit, and was not just continuing Ingarden or Husserl. There is also another perspective in which my readings were important for the development of my thought. I was dealing also with literature. I received a second doctorate in French literature. And in Fribourg I also studied with some intensity Slavic literature, and continued to be interested in the plastic arts and music. I no longer painted or played, because the lack of time. At the same time I developed a fascination with another line of phenomenological inquiry, a quite natural extension of phenomenology, namely psychology. From Piaget's psychological study of the development of the child you can move to Husserl's picture of the genesis of consciousness. Binswanger moved phenomenology in the direction of psychiatry. I developed a great interest in the human sciences, too. My thought was not shaped only by the digestion of philosophy, but became a wider basis encompassing the fine arts, literature, the human sciences, etc. Now, if you would ask me how I understand phenomenology and philosophy, I would give as an example an intermediary work that I published; it was my first work in English language, which shows how my thought has unfolded from thereon. That was *Phenomenology and Science in Contemporary European Thought*, published in 1960 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux in New York. It came out in hardback and paperback and was an instant success. It was used as an introductory text in phenomenology at colleges, even at a seminar in psychology at Harvard, and so the first printing of 10,000 sold out in a year. It was translated into Japanese right away, and a new edition came out there a few years ago. I have been asked many times to revise it for translation. It was a novelty then to write on the influence of phenomenology in the sciences. There was an influence from the very beginning of phenomenology, but it had not been much written about it. After my book appeared there was a stream of articles, essays, and books on the subject. So, if it were to come out in new translations, I would have to revise it to take into consideration all that has been said since. But for that I've never had time. In this little book of about 220 pages, I analyze the influence of phenomenology precisely in the human sciences and aesthetics, which covers a large ground of human investigation, and that is how I understand phenomenology. Let us remember, that Husserl's first intent was to establish phenomenology as a *mathesis universalis*, just like Leibniz's universal science, i.e. as a fundamental ground-

work from which all human knowledge can be explicated, and in which all human knowledge can find its roots. Well, this little book of mine shows the steps of my thinking in that direction. However, in order to frame a *mathesis universalis* Husserl had first to abandon the regional ontologies he had undertaken by applying his *epoché*. He concluded that the *epoché* did not take him to the ultimate foundation. As we know, he then entered into the realms of consciousness as the ultimate foundation and from there he moved on to the *Lebenswelt* as the last foundation. But the *Lebenswelt*, if you analyze it clearly, cannot be the last foundation either. To make phenomenology a universal science one has to go much deeper than Husserl did, and one cannot stop at any phase of his proposal. He himself was changing his proposal as he went along, and at no stage did it prove to be satisfactory. Thus, I had to develop. Well, I naturally was digging, and finally I struck at the real stream of all rationality, because that is what was really in question. As you remember, Leibniz took the universal characteristic to be the rational axiom for all foundations. In radical contrast to Leibniz, I found the foundation for all rationality in the development of life. Here we are. I have since developed a phenomenology of life which is meant to be a *mathesis universalis* for all natural sciences, for all the human sciences, and also for all human knowledge.

Raynova: *I see, but how do you understand Life?*

Tymieniecka: This is an impossible question. We say "as large as life." With life comes everything. But the point at which I struck the key to the Pandora's box of life was the point at which I realized that there is no life without self-individualization. The dynamic process of life is not topsy-turvy. The elements of life do not coalesce and inter-generate at random, whimsically, as Bergson would have it. It does not unfold without any direction or constraint or element of proportion. To the contrary, here is a self-individualizing process in which life forms itself in accordance with an entelechial code.

Raynova: *You are about to finish a paper, which is the final part of the forth volume of Logos and Life. Could you outline the most important points of this final work?*

Tymieniecka: To be exact, I have now finished four different papers, not just one on this subject. Together they will go into the fourth volume of my book *Logos and Life*; they mark my progress, my advance. Now, to answer your question in a way that would relate to what I have said by now, in the three volumes of *Logos and Life* already published, I have laid down the foundation for a phenomenological investigation of life, which means the uncovering of a completely new field of research. It is not that a field on which life could be investigated had already been prepared by philosophy or by phenomenology in particular. Precisely not. Maybe Husserl had advanced the furthest by talking of the *Lebenswelt*, in which the world and life somewhat interact, but that is not far enough. The question still remains, namely which are the reasons for the particular forms of the world that we can find only in the

principles of life per se. So, you see, these principles, which Leibniz – in another context and while having another end in view – called using an excellent term "the inner workings of nature," have to be uncovered. When we manage to engineer an entrance into the inner workings of nature and then slowly realize the main bearings for such an inquiry, then we can truly pursue it. This inquiry is not like the phenomenal world around us that we investigate at first hand, it is not like the mathematical world in which we start with a first theorem and then unroll everything else. It is something that had not been done in philosophy and which needs a complete beginning, an uncovering. The phenomenal world, the world of the manifestation of life, I likened to clothing on a body. From those clothes, magnificent as they may be, we do not see what the body is like and how it functions. In the first volume of *Logos and Life*, which is the most substantial, I uncovered these inner workings of nature, entering into them through an examination of the creative experience. In the creative experience of man, it is precisely the way in which we can enter the inner workings of life. In the second volume, I showed that life in its marvelous self-individualizing development culminates in the inventive, creative unfolding of life with the human being. But then there comes the point where the human being asks about the ultimate unfolding of life, or the ultimate sense of it. All goes along the line of the formation of sense. And then, in the pursuit of this ultimate question, there is an undoing of this marvelous creative work that has been established as that pursuit spins something which I call the transnatural destiny of the soul, until it spins away from the logos of life altogether. In the third book, I showed how self-individualization unfolds in a specifically human way, that is, in culture. Now, what I have done in these four new papers is this: in two of them I have gone through the analyses of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty to show that these analyses indicate that there is precisely a level of the inner workings of life without which their analyses would hang in the air. They themselves do not reach the point of entering into the inner workings of life, but without going that further step we cannot understand the meaning of terms like "the flesh of the world" in Merleau-Ponty, or see how the genealogy of logic of Husserl is really rooted in experience. In the third paper, I have entered on something quite particular. We are now dealing with issues in our society that only philosophy can deal with. As Bertrand Russell said, philosophy always develops in relation to the actual problems of the world. Philosophy does not develop just in the discussions of scholars. It always reflects the consciousness of a culture. Now, one of the great problems that pervades all human civilization today is that of ethics. There are ecoethics, bioethics, social ethics. We read about them in the newspapers all the time, but they are completely without any direction. All of these ethics just "beat around the bush," as Americans say, they don't touch the real point. So, in a paper that I read at the *Entretien* of the International Institute of Kyoto in September, I proposed that the crucial thing for civilization is to find the measure of things. In ethics you

cannot talk about principles and norms of behavior unless you find a measure by means of which these principles and rules should be distributed. Whether it is justice, honesty, sincerity, or whatever, there will be always the need to measure its degree. The great question is the question of measure. This is what we have completely lost amidst our marvelous technological progress. That progress has somewhat caught human beings unprepared, and we have such a difficulty adjusting our conception of life, personal life and social life, to these changes. We have no orientation. We don't know what to expect, or what we should expect and strive for. So for all this it is an absolute necessity that we grasp the measure in things. And so I have proposed in a deep swing into my philosophy that the principles of measure can be found in life itself through self-individualization in existence. The model of self-individualization fits every field, whether it be the study of the inorganic, the organic, bios or zoe, gregarious life, social and cultural life, at each step of the unfolding a measure is intrinsic. So we do have an enormously diversified and yet coherent ladder of measurement precisely in the model of self-individualization in existence. And so I have proposed this for the physical sciences, as well as for the human sciences. The biological sciences are in enormous need of an axis about which to organize their research. It is being done in a fragmentary way. Nothing is known in any of the biological sciences about the inner workings of the whole. There is no orientation. The principle of self-individualization, which I have developed at length in my explorations, is the key to finding measure amid our present disarray. The fourth paper, which I will be presenting at the upcoming American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division Meeting will address the origins of rationality. Measure can be found at all levels of life, since each level presents a certain type or modality of rationality. So the whole investigation of life is the investigation of the genesis of rational articulations. I am going to present in the line of the genealogy of logic the relationship between experience, especially sensory experience, and the function of logical judgment. Husserl assumed – it was one of his revolutionary thoughts – that there is continuity between experience and judgment, and that, as Kant said, there cannot be experience without judgment and judgment without experience. Husserl actually went much further than Kant, due to the fact that he demonstrated the truth of this in detail. But I consider Husserl's investigation insufficient, because when he introduces transcendental consciousness as the factor of judgment, he does not know in function of what transcendental consciousness is capable of taking further steps than empirical life and its experience. So I am proposing a new idea of how it is possible that with judgment we enter into the specifically human creative realm.

Raynova: *You say that there is a need of orientation in the biological sciences, and, if I understand you rightly, it is philosophy, in particular the Phenomenology of Life, which could give them the key. But actually, with the boom of scientific rationality, with the pronounced*

"death" of the Subject, the "end" of the grand narratives, or even with the "end" of History, many people (scholars, intellectuals, politicians) don't see any necessity of philosophy as academic discipline. In that context, what is (for you) philosophy, and why still we need it?

Tymieniecka: In our days, the practice of philosophy is in great decadence, because the majority of the present-day philosophers, who occupy the attention of the world, are relativists. They relativize philosophy to just a special activity of the mind and give up philosophy's principle vocation. The vocation of philosophy in the West from the time of the ancient Greeks has been that of answering the questions that no other branch of knowledge can answer. Scientific inquiry, the fine arts, letters have proved incapable of answering some questions. Each branch of knowledge is always striving toward some most general principles and toward understanding reality in terms of these principles. But philosophy today is giving up this quest. Its purview is divided into small fields such as analysis of language, and hermeneutic procedures. It is just a dialectical occupation. I am audacious enough in this "dürftige Zeit", as Heidegger put it, to maintain the real vocation of philosophy. I ask: Why are things as they are? Why is life as it is? Why do human beings strive in such a way and not another? Answering these questions is the vocation of philosophy. Doing it means to go to the roots of human thinking and acting. Now, if you ask me how the phenomenology of life can fulfill this vocation, well, as I have already indicated to you, it descends to the inner workings of nature through the creative act of the human being and not through the cognitive act that philosophy has focused on for centuries. In the creative act, man is the doer and he is dealing with the inner workings of nature as they related to him and to all other human and living beings. This is what I call the unity-of-everything-that- is-alive. It is through the creative act one can descend to this deepest plane on which everything is being played. However, how can we do justice to all of the regions of knowledge in this field? Unfortunately, philosophy is sifting through everything by applying the *epoché* or by using some other method converting philosophy in a distilled agglomerate of our knowledge. This has been the bias of the majority of philosophers in the West. If this reduction was not achieved through the transcendental reduction, it has been done by reducing everything to the level of empirical sensuous knowledge. Or, it was a purely mathematical approach that was taken, or a completely spiritualistic one. In the West, the proposal of each philosopher has involved some major bias, a limited "correct" perspective within which all life and all human acts, attitudes, and comprehension are to be viewed. I totally disclaim any bias of this sort, because in the creative act we necessarily confront all of the perspectives/modalities of living beings in the unity-of-everything-that- is-alive. How, though, when I have said that our approach is an interdisciplinary *mathesis universalis*, can we deal with the givenness of sociological life, the givenness of the artistic life, or the givenness of the life of empirical research in a way that puts all together? Here I

return to Husserl's great "principle of all principles," as he called it. He did not follow this principle in a thorough-going way, for in one life one cannot do it. The "principle of all principles" says that every type of experience whether it is sensory, whether it is imaginative, whether it is remembrance, or a projection of hopes, whether it is a mathematical intuition, it is equally worthy of philosophical treatment, provided that each of these types is treated in its proper way. That is, mathematical experience has to be approached in a way proper to mathematics, psychological life in a way proper to psychology, etc. The nub here is that each type of experience has to be apprehended, to be "heard", and registered in its own language. As the Germans say: "Hier liegt der Hund begraben." We cannot in the same language treat experiences that have little in common; a strictly rational reflection, for example, cannot be treated in the same way as aesthetic sensitivity and sublimation. So each type of experience necessitates its own approach, or "ear", and cannot be reduced to some other as has been done throughout the whole history of philosophy. We have made these reductions in quest of a unified field. This was the task of the philosophers of the past. It is just the opposite that I am doing; I am giving a specific "hearing" to each type of experience and inventing for each a special language. My phenomenology of life uses five languages. First, I use a strictly scholarly matter-of-fact language for reflection, for reasoning. Then I use an aesthetic, literary, poetic language for the things of the fine arts, of poetry, and aesthetics. I have a common sense language for treating sensuous experience. In addition, I have an extremely refined conjectural language, which I use when I make a strict description and when I move from it to conclusions at a higher level. My cosmological work has been done on the basis of conjectural inference. Basing myself on the phenomenological essential analysis of reality, I have been seeking the points where this reality points to explanation. And so, by conjectural inference, I have postulated from these indications at a higher level an explanation of the reality. Finally, I have a special language for the phenomenology of the sacred. No matter what convictions we may have, no matter what our attitudes are in this respect, even if we be deaf to religious experiences and the spiritual life, just as some are deaf to music, or insensitive to aesthetic experience, we cannot dismiss spiritual experiences. This type of experience is universal. Everyone can potentially have one. We cannot speak directly of spiritual experiences, though, of the spiritual genesis of the human being that all are capable of, and the greatest majority develops in some way. Yet another, most complex language is needed to do justice to these experiences. The second volume of my *Logos and Life – The Three Movements of the Soul* – is devoted to this.

Raynova: *Let us focus on the relation between the Phenomenology of Life and the Sacred. You say that we need a "more complex language" in order to apprehend and to*

explain religious experience, i.e. the phenomena of religious life. Would this imply the elaboration of a new religious philosophy using the phenomenological approach to life?

Tymieniecka: Well, I have to say categorically no, because the way in which I understand philosophy tells me that philosophy has to know its own limits. Philosophy, as we know, especially with Husserl, has to be self-legitimizing, that is, its procedure has to be legitimized by the standards of thought itself. Religion, religious life, religious experience, religious phenomenon do not belong to the same rational framework to which philosophy belongs. Philosophy can legitimize itself only within a certain rational framework, which is the rational framework of life. Actually, the phenomenology of life that I have developed is at the same time a critique of reason, a critique of reason in the sense that I am radically counteracting the idea that there is one reason, the reason of the human mind, which is held up as the measure of whatever happens in nature. I say to the contrary that the human mind is only one among an infinite number of rationalities. The whole realm of life through its different phases, beginning with pre-life, then passing to organic life, then to the zooidal realm, advances through rational articulations that belong to the nature of life itself. Life is projecting an enormous network of rational articulations, some limited to events, or to functions, others being processes. These projected rationalities could be compared to the thread spun by a spider, along which the spider can then walk. Just so, these rationalities carry life. All of these rationalities of life together with the rationalities fulgurating out of the human mind, which also proceed from life, form a rational field. But the whole point of a religious creed is that it transcends this framework. The question of the divine transgresses the limits of life, it launches beyond, to the radically Other, the radically different. Consequently, if phenomenology, as I envision it, is supposed to encompass the whole field of rationalities relative to life, then religion is beyond it, and it could not be grasped by philosophy in a way proper to philosophy. However, as I pointed out, philosophy cannot ignore religious experience, just as it cannot ignore any other experience. It is capable to articulate religion's development and to illuminate its significance, up to a certain point. Beyond that point, where it is a question of transcendence, there is a limit.

Raynova: *One last question. What motivated you to leave the University career and to found the World Phenomenology Institute?*

Tymieniecka: This final question might have been more properly asked in the middle of this interview. For when I founded the World Phenomenology Institute, it was out of a profound need to be able, in conversation with a community of scholars, to develop my initial intuitions and ideas, which I could not do at a university. I had taught for twenty years at seven American universities and one in Canada, teaching mostly graduate students preparing their doctoral dissertations. This should mean that one can engage in regular philosophical

conversation. Well, this is not the case. I never could have advanced my thought in that setting, for a serious teacher is concerned to impart the very basics for the students' own sake. A teacher owes first allegiance to his or her students. So I decided after those twenty years to form a true community of scholars. And we can say that from 1968 on, my thought has developed together with the Institute since the themes discussed proceed from my own questions, the development of which is advanced by the work and the discussions of the scholars, out of which new interests are generated. While through our seminars, symposia, and conferences there runs a strong leitmotif, each scholar does what he or she wants, and so the Institute advances philosophically. It is a reciprocal work. My thought would not have advanced as well as it has, had it not been for this interaction within the community of the Institute. The Institute affords scholars the opportunity to focus on their principal interests and, especially, on what they may not be able to discuss with their colleagues at their institutions, given some political concerns. Here they can speak their soul out and be listened to with respect and attention. It is precisely this core idea that our aim is the progress of philosophy which attracts scholars from around the world. It has now attracted scholars from fifty-eight countries. And there is always a new generation coming. We are now working with a third generation of Japanese phenomenologists as well as with a third generation of Chinese scholars, who have come very quickly to phenomenology, practically in no time, just in twenty years. I am not even mentioning the French, where you can see that we are attracting already the fourth generation. They stream to us, because they see that here is a forum where they can grow expansively in their thinking, and to be truly appreciated and respected. In brief, it is the very personal interest in the problems of philosophy that can flourish here, and that is the main point of our Institute.